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A ROYAL OPERA.

The following brief, but significant, account of the new opera, written by His Royal Highness the Duke of Coburg, is extracted from the letter of the correspondent of the *Times* at Vienna, which appeared on Monday:—

"Placards posted by order of the municipal authorities announced that the Sovereign would be present at the first representation of the new opera, *Casilda*. According to the Vienna papers, the streets 'swam in a sea of light,' but the truth is, that with the exception of the public offices and the Henmarkt barracks, the illumination was infinitely inferior to any which has taken place since I have known Vienna. Transparencies there were none. The Emperor, who did not appear at the Opera, drove through the streets for about half an hour in the course of the evening.

"The public papers do not agree in their opinions as to the merits of the Duke of Coburg's new opera, *Casilda*. The private opinion of the musical world is that the opera will soon vanish from our stage. The first and second acts are heavy in the extreme, the third is somewhat better. By way of a hint to English *impresarios*, I may remark that the only singer who created any great sensation here during the Italian season was the barytone De Bassini, who, with a splendid voice, and an excellent method, is a first-rate actor."

Mr. Lumley, or Mr. Gye must look after De Bassini, whose great talent, both as actor and singer, we have frequently heard spoken of, as well as read, highly praised in the foreign journals. Barytones are not so plentiful that the directors of our Italian Operas should allow a great celebrity to pass by neglected. Perhaps the managers of both houses are waiting until Signor De Bassini is *passé*, and then he will be brought to London, and a *furor* attempted to be established in his favour. It may be remarked that *passé* singers are no novelty at either establishment.

THE WORCESTER MUSICAL FESTIVAL.

(FROM OUR OWN REPORTER.)

TUESDAY, Aug. 26th.

The 128th anniversary of the choirs of Worcester, Hereford, and Gloucester, commenced this morning. Owing to the success of the Gloucester Festival last year, the requisite number of stewards for the present gathering at Worcester was readily forthcoming, and the preliminaries for the musical performances at the Cathedral, and in the College Hall, were arranged, at an unusually early period, under the

active and intelligent direction of the Rev. Robert Sarjant, Honorary Secretary.

We entered last year at great length into the history of the origin and progress of these praiseworthy meetings, in which music is made the handmaid of charity, and a refined and civilizing art becomes subservient to the offices of benevolence. A brief summary will, therefore, suffice to place the special object of the festivals, and their immediate and relative influence in a clear point of view.

Early in the last century, the members of the choirs of Worcester, Hereford, and Gloucester, were accustomed to assemble annually in their respective cities in rotation, to perform sacred music in the Cathedral. In 1724, Dr. Byssie, Chancellor of Hereford, and brother of the Bishop, proposed, in an eloquent sermon, that after the performances a collection should be made at the doors, to be devoted to the maintenance and education of the orphan children of the poorer clergy of the three dioceses, or of the members of the choirs. Six stewards, a clergyman, and a layman, belonging to each diocese, were appointed, and a collection was made, after morning service, in Gloucester Cathedral. The first real festival of the three choirs must, therefore, be chronicled as having taken place at Gloucester in 1724. In the two following years Dr. Byssie recommended similar collections at Worcester and at Hereford (his own diocese). At Gloucester the charity was first extended to the relief of widows, thus materially enhancing its utility. For several years the meetings continued slowly progressing, and the small amount of relief afforded, even as late as 1812, may be surmised from the fact, that except in a few very pressing instances, the highest amount accorded to a widow was eighteen guineas, and to an orphan sixteen. In 1768, when the Duke of Beaufort was president of the society, it was agreed, at a general meeting, that the members should assemble the following year at Gloucester, to give two concerts, under the forfeiture of one guinea in case of non-appearance, and that certain preliminary meetings should take place at the instance of the society, absence from any one of which entailed the penalty of 5s. The money accumulating from these not very formidable impositions was devoted to the payment of the band, the stewards being responsible for all deficiencies. The original charge for admission to the concerts was 2s. 6d., which, in 1752, on account of the extra expense incurred by the preparations for Handel's oratorio of *Samson*, was raised to 3s. Of the many eminent singers and instrumental performers who appeared at the meetings of the three choirs, and of the various conductors

and composers, a full account appeared in our report of the Gloucester Festival last year. Very few particulars relating to the oratorios and concerts, however, are extant previously to 1755, when the festival was held at Worcester, and the use of the College Hall was first granted for the evening concerts and ball by the Dean and Chapter, who fitted it up at their own expense. From this year a regular account of the performances stands on record; and from this year may perhaps be dated the prosperity of the meetings, and their increasing importance to the charity. In 1757, at Gloucester, when Handel's *Messiah* was first performed in the English provinces, the meeting was prolonged to four days, *vice* three, inclusive of the full service at the Cathedral on the first day, which has always preceded the festival. The *Messiah* was not performed in the Cathedral, but at the Boot Hall, now an inn, and was received with rapturous applause. If the assertion of a celebrated musical historian, that this sublime work has "fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and fostered the orphan," was true when Dr. Burney wrote, how much more so now, when more than half a century has elapsed, and its attraction remains unabated. Six years later, the price of tickets was raised from 3s. to 5s. In 1798, at Hereford, owing to the increasing expenses of the festival, it was found impossible to find stewards, and but for the Duke of Norfolk, who assembled all the principal singers and players of the day in his house, at Horn Lacy (among whom were the celebrated Italian vocalist, Banti—Lindley, the patriarch of the violoncello, now living—and Dragonetti, the famous contrabassist, not long deceased), and obtained from them the offer of their gratuitous services, the meeting at this diocese would have dropped, without the likelihood of a revival. Happily, the nobility and gentry of the county would not sanction such a stigma upon their liberality, but at a numerous meeting came to the resolution of continuing the festival at their own risk, the precaution being adopted, at the suggestion of the Duke of Norfolk, of increasing the number of stewards, so as to divide and lighten the burden of responsibility. In 1807, at Hereford, the price of tickets was raised to 7s. 6d. At Gloucester, in 1811, when Madame Catalani, the most celebrated singer of the day, was heard for the first time, there was another advance in the charge for admission, which raised the tickets to 9s. This was probably, with the exception of the Worcester meeting of 1809, when 810*l.* was collected at the doors of the Cathedral, the most successful meeting, as far as the charity was concerned, since the first institution of the festival. The expenses, nevertheless, was so heavy (amounting to no less than 2,335*l.* 8s. 5d.) owing to the large sum paid to Madame Catalani, and the unusual number of performers engaged, that the profits were only 23*l.* 12s. 7d., and, but for the collection, which amounted to 778*l.* 5s. 10d., the charity would have received small benefit from the meeting.

We need not enter into any account of the progress of

the festivals from 1811 to the present period. It is consolatory, however, to find that, while forty years have elapsed, the meetings still go on and the charity is still supported. It would, in our opinion, entail an indelible disgrace on the noble and wealthy inhabitants of the three counties if, from lack of spirit and generosity, they were allowed to be suspended for any period, much less to stop altogether. An institution which kindles the warmth of charity through the medium of a beautiful, an innocent recreation, which encourages love and good fellowship while offering aid and consolation to the needy, should be supported by every possible means. We say nothing of the great benefit accruing to the cathedral cities themselves, by the extra consumption of such articles of commerce as are most immediately the object of general demand on such occasions, since, after all, this is but a minor consideration to the other. Still it should not be overlooked; and we are satisfied that there is not an inhabitant of Worcester, Hereford, and Gloucester but would deeply regret the discontinuance of the triennial music meetings. Viewed in a purely artistic light, it must be granted that these festivals have remained somewhat stationary. While Birmingham has given *Elijah*, and Norwich the *Fall of Babylon*, to the English public, Worcester, Hereford, and Gloucester persist in adhering to works already the property of the world, and have never invoked the aid of living genius to further the noble object they profess to have in view. Better late than never. The three choirs will, probably, soon be made aware that to march with the times is indispensable to continued prosperity.

The stewards for the present year are—The Earl of Harrowby, Sir Charles Hastings, M.D.; Mr. W. S. P. Hughes (Mayor of Worcester), the Rev. E. H. Cradock, the Rev. A. Wheeler, the Rev. C. Crewe, Mr. J. Benbow, M.P.; Mr. J. P. Brown-Westhead, M.P.; Mr. George Rushout, M.P.; Mr. Robert Clive, Mr. W. E. Essington, Mr. W. Hancock. The President is the Bishop of Worcester. The programme of the musical performances offers great attractions. In addition to the full service to-day at the Cathedral, to-morrow, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, on Thursday Handel's *Samson* and Spohr's *Last Judgment*, and on Friday the *Messiah*. There will be concerts in the evening at the College-hall this evening, Wednesday, and Thursday. The ball, we presume, will come off, as usual, on the Friday evening at the Town-hall. We have already announced in the *Musical World* that the principal singers engaged for the festival are Sophie Cruvelli, Madame Castellan, Misses Birch, Dolby, and Williams, Messrs. Sims Reeves, Locket, Machin, and Herr Formes—a strong phalanx of talent. The band, led by Mr. Blagrove, and conducted by Mr. Done (organist of the Cathedral), comprises many of the most noted London performers, and the chorus, selected from London, Liverpool, Birmingham, and the vicinity, is on the accustomed scale of efficiency. Mr. Amott (organist of Gloucester Cathedral,) is the organist, and Mr.

Townshend Smith (organist of Hereford Cathedral,) will preside at the pianoforte, during the evening concerts.

The prospects of the present meeting are brighter than any one had anticipated. The demand for tickets seems to have been very great, and the friends and promoters of the festival are persuaded that it will turn out one of the most successful on record. May their anticipations prove correct.

The rehearsal of the sacred music took place yesterday morning, in the nave of the Cathedral, in presence of very few strangers, the stewards having judged it fit to keep the preliminaries as strictly private as possible. Perhaps they were right. The Cathedral of Worcester is one of the most venerable of those monuments of ecclesiastical architecture in which this country is so rich. The principal features of the edifice, as it now appears, date as far back as 1380, when the building was finished and perfected as a whole. The realization of the first plan, made by Bishop Wulstan, but twice destroyed by fire, was accomplished, however, in 1224, by William de Blois, Bishop Sylvester, to whom the great cross aisle, the lady's chapel, the upper aisle, and above all, the choir, one of the most magnificent in England, are attributed. Little of Wulstan's share in the construction can be identified beyond the arch at the north-west end of the vestry, and some rooms over the passage from the cloisters to the deanery; and nothing of Bishop Oswald's Saxon church is supposed to remain but two arches in the western nave, which, however, are accorded to him on questionable authority. The length of the Cathedral from east to west is 394 feet, the breadth of nave and aisles 78. The nave, which is 66 feet long, is admirably adapted for the purposes of music. The effect of the organ, pealing through the aisles and resounding in the choir, is grand and impressive, and enhanced by a chorus and orchestra of more than 300 executants almost reaches the sublime. The truth is that nowhere so well as in a cathedral can the full effect be given to the simple and massive combinations of the oratorio composers. Not only in a point of view purely acoustical are they manifestly superior, but the sacredness of the place lends additional solemnity to the music, by inducing a train of feeling in the mind of the listener, which in a profane edifice is not likely to be engendered.

All the principal singers were present at the rehearsal yesterday, except Madame Castellan and Herr Formes, who not being announced to sing till Wednesday, arrived only to-day. Among the features of the evening concerts are Mendelssohn's *Walpurgis Night*, selections from *Jessonda* and *Euryanthe* and a new dramatic *Cantata*, founded upon Schiller's *Fridolin*, composed by Mr. Frank Mori, from which a great deal is expected. At the first concert to-night Cruvelli will introduce the grand air from *Fidelio*, one of her most splendid efforts in London. As Cruvelli has never previously appeared in the provinces, the greatest curiosity exists to hear her sing, and she certainly constitutes no small part of the attraction of the Festival. She is already celebrated in the provinces. Festivities of all kinds will prevail during the week. Public breakfasts are promised every morning, that of the mayor of Worcester (Mr. W. S. P. Hughes), who invited no less than a thousand of the notabilities of the city and county having been given this morning, at the Guildhall. The sermon for the charity, was, after full service at the Cathedral, preached this morning by the Rev. E. H. Cradock, canon of the Cathedral. The arrangements of the Midland Counties Railway to facilitate and promote the objects of the Festival are spoken of with satisfaction.

The Mayor's public breakfast went off with great éclat this morning at the Guildhall. In the absence of the Mayoress,

Mrs. Robert Sarjant, wife of the honorary secretary of the festival, received the guests. About 600 out of the 1,000 who were invited actually came. The Guildhall, chiefly used for public balls and meetings, was built in 1723 by Thomas White, a pupil of Sir Christopher Wren, and a native of Worcester. It is a handsome edifice, though somewhat profusely ornamented. The large room, which contains statues of Charles I., Charles II., and Queen Anne, and is about 110 feet long, 25 broad, and 21 high, was fitted up with good taste, expressly for the occasion, and music was performed during breakfast by the Worcester Yeomanry band. About half-past 10 the whole company left to attend morning service at the Cathedral. At the concert-rehearsal last night Mr. Frank Mori's new *cantata*, entitled *Fridolin*, was tried, and created a good impression upon all present. Mademoiselle Cruvelli rehearsed some of her pieces with as much spirit and energy as though she was singing in presence of the public—which display of good will appeared to give much satisfaction to the stewards, and the select party of their friends who were present. There can be little doubt of the effect Mr. Lumley's new *prima donna* is destined to produce on her first appearance before the worthy inhabitants of Worcester and its vicinities. The great enemy to the Festival is the all-absorbing Crystal Palace, which continues to draw so many persons from all parts of the country to London. From Stourbridge, an adjacent district, no less than 450 went up yesterday by rail, via Birmingham. Under the circumstances it is no less consolatory than surprising that the music meeting should promise to turn out so well, and that so large a number as 1,300 persons should be found assembled at the Cathedral on the first day, which is always regarded as the least attractive.

The festival began under somewhat gloomy auspices. The anticipations of fine weather, which were universal yesterday, were to-day altogether dispelled. From an early hour the rain began to come down, and continued, without intermission, the greater part of the day. Nevertheless, a numerous congregation assembled (nearly 1,300) at service in the cathedral, which commenced at the usual hour, 11 o'clock. The "preces" and "responses" of Tallis, and the "Dettingen Te Deum" and "Jubilate" of Handel, formed parts of the selection. Formerly the Te Deum of Purcell, and that of Handel, composed for the Peace of Utrecht, used to be performed alternately; but the sublimity of the "Dettingen" has won it the preference for nearly a century. The "Jubilate" of the same composer, has also been mainly instrumental in putting aside that of Purcell, which was once very popular, and must always be highly esteemed, as one of the masterpieces of the greatest musical genius to whom England has given birth. At the same time, with a profound respect for the masterpieces of Handel, we must confess we should not be sorry to hear a new setting of the words "Te Deum" and "Jubilate" by some competent hand—not to supersede Handel, which would be a difficult matter, but to afford the world an opportunity of judging how modern art could give expression to those important passages of the cathedral service. The performance of the two works in question, in which the principal voice parts were taken by Misses Birch, Dolby, and Williams, and Messrs. Lockey and Machin, was as correct and effective as might have been expected from able and practised singers, thoroughly familiar with the music. After the third collect Dr. Elvey's anthem, "In that day," of which a criticism appeared in the *Musical World*, on the occasion of its performance by the London Sacred Harmonic Society at Exeter-hall, was given, the solo voice parts by the members of the cathedral choir. Dr. Elvey's composition, although neither masterly nor sublime, certainly improves upon acquaint-

ance. The sermon was preceded by the ancient version of the 47th Psalm, "O God, my strength and fortitude," for full chorus, choir, and quartet (Misses Birch and Dolby, Messrs. Lockey and Machin), and followed by Mendelssohn's superb anthem, "When Israel out of Egypt came," one of the noblest examples of modern church music extant. The execution of both works was, on the whole, very satisfactory, although Dr. Elvey's being easier went with more decision. Mr. Done, the conductor, and Mr. Amott, the organist, performed their duties efficiently, and the chorus, almost entirely selected from provincial societies, showed no lack of force or discipline. The band appeared somewhat weaker than has been customary at these meetings, especially in the string department (which was frequently observed in the florid accompaniments of Mendelssohn), but of this we shall be better enabled to judge at the evening concerts. The sermon was delivered with remarkable emphasis and clearness by the Rev. E. H. Cradock. The text was from the Gospel of St. John, chapter 9, verse 4—"The night cometh, when no man can work." After an eloquent and somewhat lengthy preamble, the Rev. gentleman referred particularly to the special object of the musical festival, and the subject could hardly have been treated with more judgment and felicity.

The collection for the charity, after morning service, amounted to £302, a sum which, taking into account that it was the first day of the festival, considerably surpassed expectation. It was just £2 above the amount obtained at the festival of 1848.

Wednesday, August 27.

The rain, which came down almost without intermission during the whole of yesterday, exercised a melancholy influence on the evening concert at the College-hall. It drove many back into the country who had intended to remain, and kept the majority of the inhabitants of the city at home. We cannot remember so thin an attendance at the first concert of any previous meeting of the three choirs. Nevertheless, as a set-off, the audience were attentive and anxious to be pleased, and the programme, which was a very good one, afforded ample grounds for satisfaction. The College-hall is one of the most curious and interesting buildings connected with the cathedral. It is situated on the College-green, at the west end of the south cloister, 120 feet in length and 38 in breadth, lofty and commodious; it is admirably adapted for a concert-room, and is far superior in every respect to the Shire-hall at Gloucester, or the Town-hall at Hereford, since it affords convenience for many more persons, while its arched roof and peculiar form promote just so much reverberation as enhances, without exaggerating, the effect of the music. Erected in 1372, at the same period as the cloister, and originally the common room or refectory of the monks, the College-hall is now appropriated to the King's or College School, founded in the year 1541, which originated from the grant made by Henry VIII. of the ancient manors and revenues of the priory of Worcester, at the dissolution of the religious establishments. The lighting of the hall has been greatly improved since the last festival, and its present aspect, at a full-dress concert, is exceedingly animated and brilliant. The following was the programme of the concert last night:—

PART I.

"The First Walpurgis Night" ...	Mendelssohn.
(Solo parts by Miss Williams, Messrs. Lockey and Machin.)	
Aria, Mr. Sims Reeves ("Favorita") ...	Donizetti.
Recitative and aria, Mademoiselle Cruvelli ("Fidelio") ...	Beethoven.
Recitative and aria, Miss Dolby, "Eccomi Solo" ("Romeo e Giulietta") ...	Guglielmi.
Solo, violin, Mr. Blagrove ...	De Beriot.

PART II.

Overture, "Egmont" ...	Beethoven.
Aria, Miss Birch, "Qui la voce" ("I Puritani") ...	Bellini.
Aria, Herr Formes, "In diesen heiligen Hallen" ("Zauberflöte") ...	Mozart.
Quartetto, Mademoiselle Cruvelli, Mr. Sims Reeves, Mr. Machin, and Herr Formes ("I Puritani") ...	Bellini.
Song, Miss Williams, "Lovely clouds" ...	Reissiger.
Cavatina, Mademoiselle Cruvelli, "Ernani involami" ("Ernani") ...	Verdi.
Madrigal ...	Marenzio.
Ballad, Miss Dolby, "Ida" ...	G. Linley.
Aria, Herr Formes, "Largo al factotum" ("Il Barbiere") ...	Rossini.
Grand Finale ("Fidelio") ...	Beethoven.

The *First Walpurgis Night* of Mendelssohn is a good substitute for a grand symphony, and left no cause for the oft-urged complaint of the concerts being composed exclusively of light and popular materials. Of this picturesque work, and the ancient legends of the Harz mountains, which Goethe made the basis of his poem, we have so often spoken in the *Musical World* that it would be superfluous to allude to them further. No effort of Mendelssohn's genius is more instinct with dramatic feeling, and none makes us more deeply regret the loss of his opera of *Lorely*, of which he only lived to complete the first act. Its execution was highly creditable. Mr. Done did not drag the times of the various movements, as is too frequently the case at these festivals. In the overture the comparative weakness of the stringed instruments was manifest, and in the choruses "Disperse, disperse," and "Come with the torches brightly flashing," there was not always the steadiness and delicacy required; but, taken together, we have heard the *Walpurgis Night* in London to much less advantage. No one sings the tenor solos in this work better than Mr. Lockey, and no one the quaint air of the old woman "Know ye not a deed so daring?" more ably than Miss Williams. Mr. Machin, who replaced Herr Formes at a short notice, did his utmost for the bass solos, which are trying and difficult; that he failed to give them due effect must be attributed to evident indisposition. The performance was listened to throughout with the strictest attention, and greatly applauded at the end. After such solid and substantial fare, the miscellaneous vocal and instrumental pieces which followed were heard with double zest. The event which excited the greatest curiosity and was the feature of the evening was the first appearance of Mlle. Sophie Cruvelli, who was welcomed with enthusiasm, and by her splendid execution of the grand recitative and air from *Fidelio*, "O tu la cui dolce possanza," proved herself fully entitled to the praises that have been lavished on her performance in the great opera of Beethoven. Nothing that Sophie Cruvelli sings, in our opinion, displays a greater variety of excellence than this; her splendid declamation in the recitative, her expressive and exquisitely touching delivery of the *adagio*, one of the most beautiful ever written, and her fire and energy in the *allegro*, are equally entitled to admiration. The audience testified their appreciation of this unexceptionable performance by unbounded applause. The "Ernani involami" of Verdi, belonging to a wholly different school, serves perhaps to more essentially display the compass and power of Sophie Cruvelli's voice, and her facility in the execution of cadenzas and roulades of the most complex and daring character; but, for our own part we must confess we would rather listen to the *adagio* of Leonora's air than to a hundred such show pieces, for which we find it difficult to get up the smallest degree of sympathy. The Worcester audience, however, were apparently not of our opinion, since they applauded

Verdi's *cavatina*, with even more fervour than the sublime inspiration of Beethoven, and would fain have had it once again but that Sophie Cruvelli, as is her wont, was discreet enough to decline the honour, and content herself with bowing her acknowledgements. Her success at the Worcester festival was unequivocally established by her performances last night. No greater success has been achieved at Worcester within our memory. Herr Formes, who also appeared for the first time at Worcester, created an impression quite as great as that of last year at the Gloucester Festival. His "In diesen heiligen Hallen" ("Qui sdegno") from *Zauberflöte*, as usual, a striking and impressive performance, was encored unanimously, and his "Largo al factotum" similarly complimented. The first time Herr Formes complied with the demand of the audience, but the second he was satisfied to reappear in the orchestra, much to the dissatisfaction of the majority, who expressed their anxiety for a repeat in a noisy and turbulent manner. Miss Dolby sang both the Italian air and the English ballad in a very finished and admirable manner; but she could hardly have made a less happy choice of songs. Guglielmi was a very poor composer, and the "Eccomi sola" has no characteristic beyond that of absolute insipidity; on the other hand Mr. Linley, deservedly popular as a ballad writer, has not been fortunate in his "Ida," which is neither more nor less than a piece of squeamish sentimentality. Miss Birch sang Grisi's aria, "Qui la voce," from the *Puritani*, in brilliant style, and received a well-deserved tribute of applause; a little less profusion in the employment of roulades would nevertheless have robbed her very clever performance of none of its charm. The lovely quartet from the same opera, "A te o cara," was perfectly executed, although by the side of three such voices as those of Sophie Cruvelli, Mr. Sims Reeves, and Herr Formes, the voice of Mr. Machin was scarcely audible. Miss Williams sang Reissiger's ballad irreproachably; Reissiger's ballad, however, is anything but irreproachable; we have rarely listened to a duller strain. The madrigal of Marenzio, a good example of the master, was well executed by the chorus, but the *finale* of *Fidelio* was a scramble from first to last, in spite of the praiseworthy efforts of Miss Birch and Herr Formes in the principal soprano and bass parts. One of the most graceful and legitimate efforts of the evening was that by Mr. Sims Reeves, in "Angiol d'amore," from *La Favorita*. Mr. Reeves had been announced for the great tenor *scena* from *Oberon*, but not being enabled to obtain a rehearsal he wisely declined to attempt it. The system of rehearsals at the festivals is very inefficient. The four days' programmes are all crammed into two, morning and evening, on the Monday—the consequence of which is that not more than half the pieces are tried, the remainder being allowed to take their chance. We have only to add that Mr. Blagrove experienced a flattering reception, and performed the hackneyed solo of De Beriot in his usual style, amidst the greatest applause; that the magnificent overture, though taken too slowly, was otherwise well played by the band; and that Mr. Townshend Smith accompanied some of the songs on the piano-forte in an able manner. The concert had the rare merit of not being too long. The result was that every one remained to the last, and nobody was tired of the performance. This should be an example to the manufacturers of festival programmes in general, who are too apt to run into outrageous and unendurable prolixity in making out their schemes—a palpable error, which should be avoided as much as possible, since it is evident that if all their attractions are offered at one concert, the others which follow must suffer materially.

Another change in the weather exercised a most beneficial influence this morning, when Mendelssohn's *Elijah* was per-

formed in the Cathedral, which was extremely full in every part, the nave, especially, being crowded. This great work appears destined to share with the *Messiah* the task of "feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and fostering the orphan." Although only five years have elapsed since it was first executed in public (in September, 1846, at the Birmingham festival) it has already, like its mighty predecessor, become an indispensable feature of every great music meeting, and its attraction is counted upon with the same certainty. There can be little doubt now that *Elijah* is the grandest musical composition of the present age. What the *Messiah* was to the past century, *Elijah* is to this—the most lofty and solemn word that music has spoken. It represents the feeling of our time, in its dramatic form and character; and as the *Messiah* has been termed the great sacred epic, *Elijah* may, with no less reason, be styled the great sacred drama of music. The performance this morning, under Mr. Done's direction was very efficient. All the performers were on the alert to do their best—which, indeed, is nearly always the case when *Elijah* is concerned, since there is not a singer or a player in England who does not remember Mendelssohn and venerate his memory, or who can ever feel otherwise than desirous of doing the fullest justice to his immortal *chef d'œuvre*. The distribution of the solo voice parts was exceedingly strong—perhaps stronger than on any previous occasion. Mademoiselle Cruvelli and Miss Birch were the sopranos; Misses Dolby and Williams the contraltos; Messrs. Sims Reeves and Lockey the tenors; and Herr. Formes the bass. Sophie Cruvelli had only one air to sing "Hear ye Israel," the most difficult in the oratorio. It was her first attempt in public in sacred music, and her first essay in the English language. Except by Mademoiselle Jenny Lind we have never heard this fine composition so well delivered.

In the *adagio* in the minor key, "Hear ye, Israel," Sophie Cruvelli found the true expression—the mixture of pathos and dignity which may be supposed to animate the heavenly messenger, who alternately reproaches and consoles the transgressing people. To the *allegro*, "I am He that comforteth," where the pathos and the minor key are abandoned, she imparted the emphasis of accent and boldness of style which are the essential characteristics of this sublime admonition. It was altogether an intellectual and a powerful performance, and so well did the music suit the voice of Sophie Cruvelli, that one might almost have believed that Mendelssohn had composed the air expressly for her. The undeviating truth of her intonation was remarkably exemplified in those passages where the higher notes, up to A sharp, were used with the entire strength of her voice, which resounded like a trumpet through the aisles, and the magnificent quality and purity of her tones were more than ever conspicuous. It was the generally expressed opinion that no such singer has been heard in the provinces since the days of Malibran. In her pronunciation of the words Sophie Cruvelli was naturally less perfect, and she must study the English language carefully before she can get rid of such defects as making "Hear" "Her" and "Israel" "Usrael" in the higher notes. Further than this, it would be unfair to criticize her at present. Herr Formes was, perhaps, never more solemn and impressive in the recitative and airs allotted to *Elijah*, the prophet. Every time we hear the great German *basso* we are struck with the improved command he is obtaining over his magnificent voice, which, like a wild and stubborn horse, is most difficult to break in, so as to bring it under entire control. Mr. Lockey sang the first tenor air, and Mr. Sims Reeves the last, in their most finished manner, and the other *soprano* solos were rendered by Miss Birch with complete efficiency. Of Misses Dolby

and Williams, in the contralto recitatives, it is unnecessary to say more than that they did justice both to themselves and to the music. The manner in which the choruses, for the most part, were sung was vastly creditable to the choir of provincial singers, who in one or two points might have read a lesson to some of our London choristers. The unaccompanied trio, "Lift thine eyes to the mountains," sung without a blemish by Misses Birch, Dolby, and Williams, was repeated at the usual signal from the Bishop, upon whose will depends all such complimentary tributes to the artists. The organist, however, should have given the chord of D previous to the second time of performance, since, there being no accompaniments, it was impossible to sustain the pitch correctly throughout. The result of this omission was disastrous to the effect. At the end of the trio the singers were found to have strayed so far from the key that the chorus, "He watcheth over Israel," which is but a pendant to it, in the same tone, or rather, indeed, another movement of the same piece, instead of being proceeded with immediately, was arrested, in order that Mr. Blagrove, the leader, might indicate the proper pitch to the choristers with his violin. Such oversights should never be allowed to occur in a meeting of high pretensions. This was the only real drawback to the general excellence of the performance. The fine quartet and chorus, "Holy, holy," in which the solo soprano part was powerfully sustained by Miss Birch, was also repeated at the desire of the Bishop. We doubt, on the whole, indeed, if any oratorio was ever heard at the festivals of the three choirs with more unalloyed satisfaction than Mendelssohn's *Elijah* to-day.

The collection at the doors amounted to 215*l.*, which, with 302*l.* obtained yesterday, already places 517*l.* at the disposal of the charity. There was upwards of 1,200 persons present; and it must not be forgotten that tickets to-day were 1*s.*; whereas yesterday, at morning service, they were only 5*s.*

Among the notable persons present were remarked:—The Bishop and Mrs. Pepys and party, the Dean and Mrs. Peel, Lord and Lady Henley, Sir O. and Lady Wakeman, Sir P. Winnington, High Sheriff, and lady; Sir J. Pakington and lady, Mr. Pakington and Lady Diana Pakington, Lady Jane Peel, Sir C. Hastings and lady, Hon. R. Clive, M.P., and Lady Harriet Clive, Mr. R. Clive, Mr. W. E. Essington and lady, Mrs. Essington, Mrs. Marriott, Mr. and Mrs. Isaac, the Mayor of Worcester and Miss Hughes, Rev. R. Sarjeant and lady, Rev. Canon Cradock, Earl Somers, Hon. and Rev. J. S. Cocks, Mr. O. Ricardo, M.P.; Mr. F. Rushout, M.P.; Mr. and Mrs. W. Hancock, Mr. Brown Westhead, M.P., and lady; Rev. A. Wheeler, Mr. Berkeley and lady, Mr. E. W. Knight, M.P., and lady, the Hon. W. Coventry and lady, the Hon. and Rev. W. C. Talbot and lady, &c.

The plates for the collection were held by Miss Georgina Lygon, Mrs. W. Hancocks, Lady Harriet Clive, Lady Winnington, Mrs. Wynn Knight, Mrs. Pepys, Mrs. Marriott, Mrs. Watkins, Mrs. Berkeley, Mrs. Sarjeant, Mrs. Ricardo, Mrs. W. E. Essington, Mrs. Isaac, and Mrs. Coventry, supported by the Hon. R. H. Clive, Mr. R. Clive, Mr. Brown Westhead, Sir J. Pakington, Mr. Rushout, Mr. G. Hastings, Mr. Ricardo, the Mayor of Worcester, Mr. Hughes, the Rev. A. Wheeler, Mr. Hancocks, Mr. Essington, and the Rev. Canon Cradock.

Thursday, August 28.

We are now, as the French say, *en pleine fête*. All Worcester seems turned out of doors. Foregate-street and High-street, which run in one continuous line through the heart of the old city, present the aspect of little Boulevards, so great is the stir and bustle of the equipages, public vehicles of every kind, and promenaders of all denominations; from the showy bearded foreigner to the plain country farmer. By the way,

the comparison of a miniature Boulevard is not so wide of the mark when we look at the shops on either side of High-street, which, from the tasteful display of their wares and their clean and handsome exterior, would do credit to the wider and more magnificent streets of the metropolis. Of the porcelain of Worcester we need only say—since it is renowned all over the world—that the eye of every stranger, as he saunters about the town, is inevitably attracted and his steps arrested by the beautiful specimens that constantly come under his notice. Had the weather been more propitious, indeed, we could hardly imagine a more favourable specimen than Worcester, with its venerable cathedral, its grey and winding cloisters, its college green, its river and picturesque bridge, its straight, neat, and orderly streets, its many venerable relics of antiquity, and the general look of comfortable well-being that distinguishes the majority of the inhabitants—to give the foreigner a good idea of an English county town.

The second concert took place last night, at the College-hall, to the accompaniment of a pelting storm of rain, which beat against the windows of the venerable building where erst the monks were wont to refresh body and spirit. In the pauses of the music the effect of this incessant flood of water was singular enough—more singular indeed, than agreeable, since the carved roof of wood, which canopies the hall, seemed scarcely impervious to the incessant libation from above; and we could not but feel apprehensive, sooner or later, of the partial administration of a natural shower bath. No such *contretemps* arrived, however, to spoil the pleasures of the evening. There were more than twice the number of persons present than at the first concert, and the desolate appearance of a vacuum, which afflicted the eye on the previous evening, no longer made the ladies shiver in their evening costumes.

The concert began with a selection from Spohr's opera of *Jessonda*, embracing the overture and the various movements of the introduction, the principal voice parts sustained by Misses Birch and Williams, Messrs. Lockey and Machin. The execution of this fine music was creditable to all concerned, and the audience received it with especial favour.

The new *cantata* of Mr. Frank Mori, entitled *Fridolin*, was however the chief feature of the evening, and its complete success warranted all that had been predicated in its favour. The ballad of *Fridolin*, or *Der Gang nach dem Eisenhammer*, by Schiller, is well known, and has been translated into almost every European language. None can have forgotten how the virtuous Countess, Cunigunda, is attached to Fridolin, her faithful page; how the wicked Robert, envious of the favour of his lady, excites the jealousy of the Count, her husband, against Fridolin; how the Count, to revenge his supposed dishonour, bids Fridolin repair to the forge and ask the workmen—"Have ye fulfilled the task my lord set you?"—having previously given instructions that he who should first make this demand was to be thrown headlong into the furnace; how Fridolin, at the request of the Countess, who apprehends danger, stops at a chapel on the roadside to pray; how the wicked Robert, burning to know the issue of his machinations against the unhappy page, goes himself to the forge, and unthinkingly puts the question—"Have ye fulfilled the task my lord set ye?" and lastly, how the workmen, heedless of his protestations, immediately and without mercy, cast Robert into the burning furnace, where he expiates his sins by an unexpected and terrible death, leaving the intended victims of his envy to mutual explanation and renewed attachment. All this is embodied in Mr. Frank Mori's *cantata*, and has been reduced to verse, subservient to musical treatment, in a very able and effective manner, by Mr. J. Palgrave Simpson. The form in which Mr. Mori has arranged his music may be traced

to Mendelssohn's *Walpurgis Nacht*, and some of the instrumental effects are not less deducible from that imaginative composition. Nevertheless there is enough of novelty and cleverness in Mr. Mori's *Fridolin* to entitle it to a more than ordinary share of respect. The overture is the least original portion of the work. It consists of a slow movement in A major, and an *allegro agitato*, beginning in A minor and ending in the major, the prominent ideas being afterwards employed to much better effect in the *cantata*. The chief merits of this overture are simplicity of design and clearness of instrumentation.

The opening chorus of vassals, "Now, rosy dawn," is of a pastoral character, not unlike in feeling to some parts of the introduction to *Guillaume Tell*, in the same key—although the melody is flowing, and by no means plagiarised. A chorus of huntsmen, bold and rhythmical, makes a happy contrast and an appropriate episode. A soprano air, "So good and mild" (sung by Miss Birch), in which Fridolin indulges in the praises of his mistress, is in the florid style, and embodies with considerable grace the artless gaiety of the page. A short chorus which follows, "No pleasure can give," is light, sparkling, and brilliant. A recitative and air for contralto (Miss Dolby), "The cheering sun of that fond eye," in which the Countess alternately bewails her husband's growing coldness and hopes for the revival of his confidence, is thoughtful and happily completed. The *andante* is eminently vocal and melodious, besides which it has an earnestness of character that well befits the sentiment. The *cabaletta*, though impassioned and well opposed to the preceding, is less effectively adapted to the voice. A quartet, "That eager look" (Misses Birch and Dolby, Mr. Sims Reeves, and Herr Formes), in which Robert spurs on the jealousy of the Count, while Cunigunda and Fridolin are wholly innocent of suspicion, is highly dramatic, and abounds in points of musical interest, especially in the last movement, where there are some striking passages. The unity of the *morceau*, however, is unhappily destroyed by the want of relationship in the keys of the movements.

We cannot suppose any possible authority for beginning a piece in C minor and ending in D major. Mr. Mori, elsewhere, sets the tonal relationship at defiance, but never with good effect. Our objection to the violation of a long venerated principle, which the greatest masters have invariably respected, is not a pedantic one, but founded on reasons both logical and natural, which, though it would be out of place to discuss here, are not the less worthy of careful investigation. Our chief, almost our only, objection to Mr. Mori's *cantata* is this entire indifference to the succession of keys in the various pieces as they follow each other, which necessarily destroys congruity, and gives to his work an air of a series of disconnected movements, instead of one continued whole.

An air for the Count, "Torn is the veil" (Mr. Sims Reeves), expresses with great dramatic force the feelings which torment the bosom of the jealous husband; a certain monotony of tone, however, partially derogates from the effect of this song, which, on reconsideration, might, we are convinced, be much improved in plan and development. A duet, "My lord commands" (Misses Birch and Dolby), in which Fridolin takes leave of his mistress before departing for the forge, of a light and popular character, is written with remarkable fluency, and highly effective both in its solo and combinations. The *ensemble*, with the bell tolling, "the vesper bell," &c., is deliciously tuneful. To be generally admired this duet, we are certain, has only to become generally known. The scene in which Fridolin prays at the chapel, consisting of solos for the page, mingled with choral responses, is admirably effective, but somewhat difficult to be executed in perfect tune, unless

very carefully rehearsed. The *finale*, which involves the catastrophe of Robert's death, is the most striking portion of the *cantata*, and shows undeniable talent for dramatic composition. The savage energy of the choral passages vividly depicts the resolution of the iron-workers to fulfil the command of their master, the Count, while the frantic despair of Robert is powerfully conveyed in short and broken phrases. We could hardly have desired a more graphic musical embodiment of this impressive situation. After some recapitulatory passages in accompanied recitative, the *finale* and the *cantata* come to a termination with a beautiful trio and chorus, "Father of all"—the trio chiefly without accompaniments—in which the Count receives the explanation of the Countess, and a general reconciliation ensues. The theme is taken up by full chorus, and orchestra as a climax, and thus brings the work to a close with dignity and grandeur.

The general style of Mr. Mori's *cantata* belongs properly to the Italian school, although the indications of a leaning to a higher and more poetical style are not infrequent. As a first work, *Fridolin* may be praised unconditionally. It shows invention, fluency, taste, and experience in the use of voices and instruments; and the effect it has produced causes us to look forward with real pleasure to any future essay of the young composer, who has already, we are informed, completed an opera for the Italian stage. In the dearth of novelty such a fact is worthy the consideration of those who are interested in these matters.

The performance of Mr. Mori's *cantata*, which only enjoyed the advantage of one very imperfect rehearsal, was, under the circumstances, remarkably good. He conducted it himself—a decided advantage to all engaged in its performance, his manner of beating being pointed and intelligible. The principal singers—Misses Birch and Dolby, Messrs. Sims Reeves and Formes—exerted themselves strenuously to do justice to the music, and to them may be chiefly attributed its having passed the ordeal so triumphantly, since the orchestra and chorus were by no means efficient. At the end, Mr. Mori was applauded vociferously, and retired from the platform "with his laurels thick upon him."

The remainder of the concert must be shortly dismissed. Sterndale Bennett's romantic and beautiful concert-overture, *The Naiades*, introduced "by desire," was well played by the band, and much applauded. The first appearance of Madame Castellan, who had only just arrived, was an event, and the charming style in which this accomplished singer, who was warmly welcomed by the audience executed Rossini's *aria*, "Arpa gentil" (harp *obbligato*, Mr. Trust), proved that the fatigues of travelling were insufficient to mar the power and beauty of her voice. Sophie Crivelli, already a universal favourite here, sang "Voi che sapete," and "Casta diva." We were pleased to observe that she refrained from ornamenting the flowing and simple melody of Mozart with any of those obtrusive changes and *fioriture* introduced when she played Cherubino, for the first time, at Her Majesty's Theatre, but which she subsequently left out, as we noticed last week, adhering rigidly to the text. The omission of *roulades* deprived the air of none of its vocal effect, but lent a double charm to the genuine and exquisite expression with which she sang it. We need say nothing of Crivelli's "Casta diva," except that, on the whole, we have never heard her sing it with more fire and brilliancy; the *cabaletta*, more especially, was a masterly display of vocal power and facility. Madame Castellan sang Rode's *air varié* in a highly effective manner; but this, like the two *airs* of Crivelli, was marred by the slovenly and imperfect style in which the orchestral accompaniments were played. On more than one

occasion the singers were almost brought to a standstill. The reason was obvious—they had not been rehearsed at all. Herr Formes sang the "Revenge" song from *Der Freischütz* with immense energy, and was loudly encored. He declined to repeat it, however, thereby setting an example which other popular singers might advantageously follow. The madrigal on this occasion was Benet's "All creatures now are merry minded," a gem in its way, and remarkably well sung. Among the features of the evening was the *andante* from the long duet in *La Donna del Lago*, by Madame Castellan and Miss Dolby; Gluck's "Che farò," sang by Miss Williams, and deservedly applauded; Mr. Costa's beautiful *terzetto*, "Vanne a colei che adoro," by Miss Williams, Messrs. Sims Reeves and Locket, an extremely good performance; and a graceful new ballad (MS.), called "The Emigrant's Farewell," by the Rev. Robert Sarjant, which Miss Dolby sang to perfection. The concert terminated with the March from Mendelssohn's *Athalie*, which kept almost everybody in the room till the end. Nevertheless, the programme was a great deal too long. Owing to the rain, which fell in torrents, a tedious period elapsed before the visitors could get into their carriages. The arrangements, by the way, are very deficient in this particular, and discomfort and inconvenience are inevitable.

This morning, another favourable change in the weather which has coquetted during the week in an extraordinary manner, was propitious to the charity, and insured a larger attendance at the cathedral than even that of the last festival on the second day. The performance embraced a great portion of Handel's *Samson*, a miscellaneous selection, and the whole of Spohr's *Last Judgment*—an unreasonably long programme. Of *Samson* we are not compelled to say more than that it was for the most part well executed, although not so well as the *Elijah* yesterday. To Mr. Sims Reeves was allotted the music of *Samson*, and we never heard him sing the air, "Why does the God of Israel sleep?" more effectively. Herr Formes, who sustained the part of Harapha, produced a marked impression in the animated air, "Honour and arms," which is perfectly suited to his strong and sonorous voice. Another impressive performance was Micah's air, "Return, O God of Hosts," by Miss Dolby, who is always at her ease in this music. Mr. Machin was in much better voice to-day, and gave the recitatives of Manoaah in a very able manner. The difficult air, "Let the bright seraphim," with trumpet *obbligato* (Mr. Harper), was allotted to Mdlle. Cruvelli, who in the elaborate divisions with which Handel has overloaded this celebrated piece, found herself much more trammelled with the words than in "Hear ye, Israel," which, moreover, is better suited to her style. She, nevertheless, acquitted herself admirably as far as vocal execution was concerned; and the clearness and resonance of her upper tones were strikingly conspicuous. Her reading of the air was vigorous and bold—precisely, indeed, what is required. She must master the English text, however, before she essays it again. A command of the language once obtained, we have little doubt that Mdlle. Cruvelli will become one of the best singers of Handel and Mendelssohn. In the two airs she has already essayed she has proved her reverence for established forms by not attempting to interpolate a single ornament or variation, and this cannot be said of many foreign singers of renown.

The choruses in *Samson*, not inferior in some respects to those of *Israel* and the *Messiah*, were in many instances well and steadily executed. The most striking were "Fix'd in his everlasting seat," "Let their celestial concerts," and "Awake the harp." The choruses of the Philistines, and that of the Israelites, "Weep, Israel," however, were deficient in clearness and precision. The Dead March was given too slow; but

the effect of the drum (played by Mr. Chipp) reverberating through the aisles, and in the choir, was wonderfully solemn and impressive. Some new additional accompaniments to the score of Handel were used on this occasion, which are by far the best written, the most discreet, and the least obtrusive we have heard. Their author was not mentioned in the programme.

In the miscellaneous selection, Miss Birch sang "Hallelujah" in a very solemn style, the audience standing. This devotional song was introduced on the present occasion by the stewards in order to redeem themselves from the reproach directed against them at the festival of 1848, in consequence of Alboni having sung it in Italian. By the way, this should have been a warning to the directors not to put down foreign vocalists for English songs without being acquainted with their amount of proficiency in the English language. Cruvelli might have acted in the same manner as Alboni, without affording any reasonable ground of complaint. Madame Castellan's "With verdure clad," a chaste and efficient performance, made the most favourable impression on all present. Of Spohr's oratorio, *The Last Judgment*, which terminated this very lengthy selection at a late hour, we have only now time to say that the solo parts were intrusted to Misses Birch and Williams; Messrs. Locket, Machin, and Herr Formes, and that the general performance, under Mr. Don's direction, was praiseworthy, if not perfect.

It is a fact worth noting—since it has acted materially against the interests of the meeting—that none of the great Catholic families of the counties of Worcester, Hereford, and Gloucester, (who were wont, not only in some cases to officiate as stewards, but to promote the prospects of the triennial festivals of the three cities in a substantial manner), have come forward on the present occasion. The inference that the charity being in behalf of the widows and orphans of clergymen of the Church of England is the cause of the withdrawal of patronage in certain quarters, appears harsh at a first glance; but recent events and controversies allow of no other to be drawn.

ALBERT SMITH AND MONT BLANC.

Our trusty friend and witty collaborator, Albert Smith, the soaring and go-a-head philosopher, the travel-stained and sea-sprinkled seeker after the wonderful, has taken his, as yet, highest flight in literature, and has absolutely scaled the summit of Mont Blanc, has kissed the grey head of the king of the Alps, and escaped without a limb being hurt, without a scratch. But hear the account, dated Chamounix, August 14th.—"This quiet Alpine valley has for the last week been in a most unusual state of activity and excitement. About seven days ago the people learned that three students from the University of Oxford, and an English author, were getting themselves into condition for attempting the ascent of Mont Blanc. Guides and villagers were at once on the qui vive, and the adventurous party were regarded with much interest wherever they went. On Tuesday morning, at seven o'clock, all the preparations being complete, the party set out from the Hotel de Londres. It included Mr. Floyd, said to be a son of the general of that name, and cousin of Sir Robert Peel; Mr. Phillips; a third Oxford man; and Mr. Albert Smith; with sixteen guides, sixteen porters, and a number of aspirants for the post of guide, who attended the voyagers and their paid party for the purpose of learning the route to the summit of the mountain. After their departure telescopes were fixed from the windows of the inn, and in other places, to watch

the progress of the toilsome ascent, and before six o'clock it was evident the voyagers had crossed the great glacier, and had arrived at their resting place for the night—on the *Grands Mulets*. Yesterday morning, as soon as day-light afforded a clear view, the adventurers were again visible by the aid of a good glass, and by twelve o'clock were seen making the final ascent. They rested on the summit for about twenty minutes, and then commenced their descent, arriving here last night about seven o'clock. The excitement during the previous twenty-four hours had been very great in Chamounix. Ambitious wives and parents having husbands and sons amongst the party up in the snows, and the interest being in no means diminished by the fact, that Sir Robert Peel (who had arrived here after the departure of his relative for the ascent) invited nearly all the men remaining in the village, about sixty in number, to an entertainment provided at an *auberge*, where they were supplied with wine and other popular liquors, in which to drink the health of the Englishmen who were sleeping on Mont Blanc. This ceremony was performed very zealously, and repeated in the most willing manner again and again till long after midnight. When in the evening the party from Mont Blanc approached the village, nearly all the inhabitants assembled to meet them. Guns were fired in quick succession; the harps and fiddles of the valley were in requisition; and a sort of half-comical half-triumphant scene ensued. The travellers and guides looked rather jaded and sun-scorched, and had very bloodshot eyes and rather dilapidated costumes, but, in other respects, seemed to be in tolerable condition.

This successful ascent by four Englishmen turns the scale of numbers in favour of the English; the French tourists having been hitherto accustomed to point with satisfaction to the fact that more of their countrymen than of ours had succeeded in reaching the top of the King of the Alps. The present forms the 25th ascent—the first dating in 1787. The cost as well as the labour and danger of these daring excursions is very great. The talk of the village declares that the ascent will cost the party of four travellers fully £150. Albert Smith gives the following account in a letter to the *Times*:—"I was accompanied by three other gentlemen, from Christ Church, and 20 guides. We left Chamounix at seven o'clock in the morning, on Tuesday, and got to our bivouac on the glaciers at the *Grands Mulets* at four o'clock. Here we made a fire and dined, and at midnight started again with lanterns, as the moon was not up, along the *Glacier de Tacconay*, reaching the *Grand Plateau* (where the avalanche swept away Dr. Hamel's party in 1820) about four o'clock in the morning. After a great deal of trouble amongst the crevices, and having at times to cut each footstep in the ice with hatchets, we scaled the *Mur de la Côté*, and got to the summit of Mont Blanc at half past nine o'clock on Wednesday morning, where we remained half an hour in the enjoyment of a perfectly cloudless view. In descending we got back to the *Grands Mulets* by one o'clock. The most dangerous part of the journey now commenced, as the extreme heat of the day had thawed much of the snow on the *Glacier du Bussans*, which threatened at every step to give way beneath us. We were, however, all tied together with cords; but for this one of our party would have been lost. We ultimately arrived in safety at Chamounix at half-past six o'clock in the evening, where the whole village turned out to meet us, and a little *fete* was prepared by M. Tairraz, of the *Hotel de Londres*, in honour of our safe return. Guns were fired and wine distributed, and at night the bridge was illuminated with pine branches. I believe we formed the largest party ever assembled together on the summit: but the increased number of

guides was necessary from the treacherous state of the snow, after the bad weather that has prevailed here lately."

Our facetious and multiple-sided contributor—who, by the way, has contributed nothing to the *MUSICAL WORLD* for an incalculable space of time—so much the worse for the *Musical World* in particular, and the World in general—has elevated himself higher than ever in public account. He has intrepidly and without vinegar surmounted the most insurmountable of the Alps. Let him be styled the literary Hannibal. Let him be crowned with an avalanche, and be sceptred with a mountain peak. Hereafter, deriving his nomenclature from *as-cent*, and not from *de-scent*, instead of Albert Smith, let him be dubbed

ALP-ERT SMITH.

MUSICAL FETE AT KIRKSTALL ABBEY.

(From the Leeds Intelligencer.)

The fine old monastic building of Kirkstall,

"Where Desolation day by day

Holds dire communion with Decay—"

though dismantled and in ruins, is still one of the most attractive and interesting spots in the whole valley of the Aire; and it is often the scene of much rational amusement and healthful recreation, upon which even the monkish men of old would not, we think, pass a word of censure. Indeed, historical records of Kirkstall Abbey—an edifice which

"Lies a little low,

Because the monks preferred a hill behind

To shelter their devotion from the wind,"—

prove that the Cistercian brethren were not at all loath to a good carousal now and then, and that of their hospitality the sons and daughters of Leeds were wont to partake. One of the most pleasing of summer festivals—one which may be denominated a *soiree musicale*—took place within the precincts of the Abbey on Monday evening last; and though the ideas suggested by such a fete in such a spot could not be of the most unimixed character, nor be untinted with that seriousness which a contemplation of the ruins of any religious temple is sure to produce in a well-regulated mind, it is not too much to say that many of the former occupants of the building, ere Bluff King Harry brought monks, friars, and nuns of all orders to a reckoning, would have expressed pleasure, under the altered circumstances of the times, at the festive proceedings of which we are about to give a passing notice. The Philharmonic Society in connexion with the Mechanics' Institution, consists of a great number of the vocal and instrumental performers, amateur and professional, of the town of Leeds, and was on Monday night, as on former occasions, conducted in the performances by Mr. Spark, the accomplished organist of St. George's church; and Mr. Bowling, organist of East Parade Independent chapel, was the leader. Both these gentlemen, and the performers generally, deserve commendation for the way in which they acquitted themselves in their different parts. The first part consisted of sacred music, opening with Weber's "Mass in G," which was given with care and solemn effect, but much of its force and that of all the subsequent pieces were dissipated as it were "on the desert air;" for the performers and the auditory stood within the roofless nave—the former just without the west side of the chancel—and the sweet sounds of both instruments and vocalists had to contend with slight currents of air from the open side of the transept and the wide space in which formerly stood the east window. Yet some of the music fell with peculiar richness upon the ear—soft, subdued, fitful, and though, owing to the circumstances we have named, there was a want of unity and strength, the general effect was one of extremely gentle pleasure. It was, like the song of the nightingale,

"Most musical, most melancholy."

A Sanctus, by Bertinowsky, without instrumental accompaniments, and Palestrina's anthem, "We have heard," were given with

much taste. The chief vocalists were Miss Brown, Miss Milner, Mrs. Gill, Miss Cooke, and Messrs. Cawthra, Mellor, Cooke, Cavill, Milner, and Rider, all of whom were in good voice, and fully maintained their professional reputation. Between the first and second parts, refreshments, in the shape of a plentiful supply of beef and ham sandwiches and nut-brown ale, provided by Mr. Stanwix, of the Victoria Dining Rooms, Briggate, were served in the Chapter House, the architectural beauties of which were made apparent to the visitors by a number of naphtha lamps suspended from different parts of the spacious apartment. After the viands had been duly discussed, the spirits of the numerous party seemed much enlivened, and a selection of secular music—madrigals, glees, choruses, &c.—was performed as the second part of the musical entertainment, ending with the National Anthem, which concluded a little before ten o'clock at night. The nave, during the performance of the second part, was well lighted with naphtha lamps—one of the most useful modern discoveries in the art of producing artificial illumination. By the skilful exertions of Mr. Huggon, the teacher of the chemical class at the Mechanics' Institution, the nave, chancel, and transept of the Abbey were for a short period lighted with a variety of coloured fires, which gave a novel and pleasing appearance to the objects that came within their influence. The rich crimson and green lights, varying in every degree of vividness and intenseness, and passing from object to object, living and inanimate, gave an air of almost supernatural beauty to the assembled company of well-dressed ladies and gentlemen, the majestic columns and windows of the ruin, the waving alder tree in the nave, and all the other objects around. A special train on the Leeds and Thirsk railway conveyed nearly the whole of the delighted company to Leeds between ten and eleven o'clock. The *fete* in every respect passed off well, and thanks are due to Mr. Traice, the indefatigable secretary, Mr. John Bingley, the honorary secretary, and other members of the Mechanics' Institution, as well as to the members of the Philharmonic Society, for the excellency of the arrangements, and the successful way in which they were carried out. Thanks are also due to George Hayward, Esq., of Headingley, for having kindly given permission for the Festival to be held at the Abbey.

SACRED HARMONIC SOCIETY.

The spirited direction of the affairs of this Society not only commands but deserves signal success, and right glad are we to hear that the profits of this season already approach near upon two thousand pounds. Undaunted by the Worcester Festival which took from them not only their principal singers but many of their band, the Society set to work in an indomitable spirit and collected at the performance of the *Messiah* last night a band equal in every respect to that we have been usually accustomed to at the Society's Concerts. Madame Novello sang the music allotted to the soprano in the most chaste and expressive manner, and taking advice from the numerous kind friends by whom she is surrounded indulged less in that excessive *fioriture* which, although displaying the richness of her voice and her facility of vocalization, is hardly allowable in the music of the *Messiah*. Both Miss Dolby and Miss Williams being at Worcester, the circumstance afforded the Society an excellent opportunity of calling to their assistance Madame Macfarren for the contralto, and we are persuaded that, judging from the beautifully devotional style of this lady's singing, the Society will be glad to engage her services on many future occasions. We never, on any former opportunity, rose so impressed with the truly solemn air, "He was despised," as last night, the reading imparted to it by Madame Macfarren bringing tears to the eyes of many of the audience. Her recitatives were magnificent, and in the concerted music, her intonation was perfect. The tenor part of the oratorio was divided between Messrs. Benson and Manvers, and the evident pains taken by both gentlemen reconciled us to the

absence of the tenor *artistes* usually engaged. Much as we admire Herr Formes, the reappearance of Mr. Phillips last night gave us cause to remark the extreme smoothness and delicacy of his rendering of the bass part of the *Messiah*, and confirmed us still stronger in the opinion we have long entertained, that for Handel's music we know no more conscientious singer than Mr. Phillips. His reverence for the text, and his expressive manner of rendering it, never fail to produce unmixed satisfaction amongst his audience. The choruses went magnificently, and, although Mr. Costa had amongst his forces some not accustomed to his baton, his unfailing nerve and rigid discipline were never less called into strong operation, the whole performance going off with remarkable precision, and with apparently less than the usual amount of exertion on his part. The Hall was crowded to suffocation. The *Elijah* is announced for next Friday, with Madame Novello, Misses Dolby and Williams, Mr. Sims Reeves and Herr Formes.

FIDELIO.

(Continued from our last.)

FLORESTAN's passionate dreaming of Leonore, with which we suppose in the finished overture the introduction closes, passes into the representation of Leonore herself in the chief subject of the Allegro. We find in this the same intention as in the corresponding portion of the first overture; but in these two later compositions such intention is carried out with an entirely different musical rendering, and with perhaps this modification of its meaning, namely, that in the first overture the idea is suggested of the heroine, having been impelled by her "innere Triebe" till she had engaged herself to Rokko in the prison, is satisfied by the supernatural power of presentiment that she has reached the goal of her desires, and, exulting in this attainment, awaits with strengthened ardour the fitting opportunity which she feels must be at hand for these desires to be fulfilled; whereas, in the second and third overtures it seems that the impulse still excites her; that she knows no satisfaction, but finds fresh stimulation to her desire in every nearer approach to its attainment:—thus in both renderings we have the presentation of Leonore in the same situation—that is, as she is supposed to be at the commencement of the opera, but with a different consideration of the feelings which this situation induces in her. The joyousness that characterises the chief subject of the first overture is replaced by earnest anxiety in the subject of these later compositions, by the restless earnestness of an ever-growing desire, which is, however, so far remote from morbidity, as it finds food for hope in the most unpropitious circumstances, and stimulate to new endeavours, even in disappointment. The syncopated accent of the subject, still more the prolonged appoggiatura which gives to it such effect of thrilling intensity, most of all the obstinate endurance of the tonic pedal, which ever continues to feed that excitement in the hearer, that it expresses in the heroine: these are the technical characteristics which distinguish the subject, and which gives to it so eminently, in our appreciation, the coloring of highly-wrought passion, and that particular signification which we have attempted to describe. There is a prodigious masterstroke in the finished overture in the introduction of four bars' further prolongation of the dominant harmony upon the tonic pedal, with the combined force of the entire orchestra, immediately before the final resolution of this dissonance, and the resumption of the subject with one of those unisonous effects in which Beethoven so wondrously displays his power. The four bars here introduced at least double the effect of all that has preceded them, and, by delaying the climax of the passage thus much beyond its evidently natural sense first conceived period, they not only increase the excitement, of which we have spoken as being a remarkable distinction of the whole subject, to the utmost possible degree, but give all the additional weight and importance to the resolution as it can acquire from our almost painfully protracted expectation of it, such expectation being fully realised. It is curious to observe in this, how some of

the best points in a great work are the results, not of the ready inspiration of genius, but proceed from the matured deliberation of the carefully-studied artist, who, having the glorious materials with which nature has endowed him to work upon, can, with one touch of mastery, give a value to his first conceptions so far above that of the brightest natural inspiration of uncultivated genius, as to mark his finished works with the stamp of classicality, and to distinguish the immortal from the ephemeral. The feeling of exultation that more especially characterises the subject of the first overture is now unmistakably portrayed, but with a more exalted, a more fervent expression, in the grand, broad expansive effect the subject assumes in the new form here given to it, in the only preface of quavers that grows out of it, and in the further partial resumption of it to which this leads. This very long continuance of the key of C major, in this portion of the movement, renders it necessary for the desirable relief, in the proper disposition of which lies the great art of musical construction and the great skill of the composer; to make a further digression from the original tonic, for the second subject, than the ordinary modulation to the dominant, which the general custom of all composers has established as the regular proceeding through which to conduct the plan of this form of composition, and, therefore, in this overture, as in his pianoforte sonata, in the same key, dedicated to Count Waldstein, and in others of his works written in the same very extensive form, Beethoven has had the art, by modulating to the more remote but still closely related key of the third instead of the fifth of the original, to preserve the feeling of tenacity undisturbed, and, at the same time, to give a very decided change of colour to the general tone of the composition, which, without so strong a relief as is thus obtained would scarcely escape monotony. This choice of the major key of the third of the original scale for that important portion of the movement comprised in what usually constitutes the dominant subject, is further justified by the sequel, and to this we shall again allude, as occasion presents itself. Now let us observe how the plan of the movement lends itself to the poetical expression which it is the object of the movement to embody. The descent in unison upon a section of the subject to F sharp, the supertonic of the key of E major, in which, as we have shown, the remainder of the first part of the movement stands, produces a marked change in the exultant feeling of confidence in approaching success which had been so joyfully conveyed in all that has gone before of this tutti for the full orchestra, and in the poignant effect of the prolonged appoggiaturas in the section of the subject now given, which here occur on very peculiar intervals, producing against the harmony notes the most sensitive dissonances, we find a most touching expression of the keen anguish with which this great heart of our heroine—greatest in the greatness of its love—is pierced by regret for that which has necessitated her exertions, even in the moment when they are about to triumph. When we have the powerful resolve to conquer all such, however natural emotions, and in the restless struggle to remove the cause for her despair, desperately to annul within her the capacity of desperation. So come we to the half close on B which introduces the second subject, and we are struck with a very important improvement on the finished overture upon the sketch, in the omission of a passage of many bars, which presents an entirely new idea that appears nowhere else in the course of the movement, and that doubtless must have been intended as the vehicle of some important expression, but which expression it, to us, wholly fails to convey. Beethoven shows, by his retrenchment of this passage, that he felt the inadequacy of the idea to the expression he must have designed in it; and he shows more, namely, his masterly power of criticising his own production in the rejection of an unworthy idea, and in the admirable condensation of the plan at a point where an extension of it even by more interesting matter would have given lengthiness to the movement and so frustrated the effect of the whole.

Miss HELEN FAUCIT, the celebrated actress, was married at St. Nicholas' Church, Brighton, on Monday last, to Theodore Martin, Esq., of James Street, Buckingham Gate. The "happy couple" are now in Paris for the honeymoon.

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE.

On Saturday the *Figlia del Reggimento* brought back Madame Sontag in her old part of Maria. The charming artist never sang more deliciously—never acted with more naïveté and fascination. She created the greatest enthusiasm in every scene, and in the lesson scene made quite a furor.

The event of the evening, notwithstanding, was the first appearance of Mademoiselle Fanny Cerito, after an absence of some years. All the subscribers in town were present, and many, no doubt, remained in town, and many more came to town, for the express purpose of witnessing the debut of one of the most popular dancers of the most quarter of a century.

It has been rightly said that Cerito has a distinctive character in her dancing. Without some peculiarity to mark her from the general run of those in her profession, Fanny Cerito could not have been the great artist she is. Taglioni possessed that distinctive character. So did Fanny Elssler. So does Carlotta Grisi. So does Rosati. So Amelia Ferraris. But in addition to her individualizing property, Fanny Cerito combines the greatest powers with the greatest charms. Perhaps her dancing possesses more infantine grace than that of any of her compatriots. In truth she appears a very grown up child on the stage, every attitude and motion recalling the springing days of childhood. We do not bow to certain authorities and classify Cerito with the merely physical artists. We perceive in her the reflection of youthful grace, she inspires us with a poetical feeling, and consequently we cannot remove her from the purely ideal. We confess that Cerito is the very incarnation of hilarity and buoyancy, the embodiment of joy. She is the quintessence, nay, the *sest-essence*, yea, the *oct-essence*, verily, the *novem-essence*—seeing her style is new as well as charming—of animal spirits in a state of exuberance. On Saturday when she appeared her reception was uproarious. The *habitués* manifestly had not forgotten their favourite *danseuse*, who from 1840 to 1844, divided the *Pas de Quatre* palm with Taglioni (the Taglioni) Carlotta Grisi and Lucile Grahn. They had not forgotten the minuet with Fanny Elssler, the *pas de trois* in *Alma*, and the *pas de l'Ombre* in *Ondine*. Neither had they forgotten the smiling, homely face of the captivating artiste herself; nor the voluptuous figure, ripe and round as a melon in season; nor the winning ways which unconsciously made bankrupt hearts; nor the thousand indescribable allurements which live in the memory, but escape description and utterance. Cerito came back like an old lover to a widower, again and legitimately to be worshipped, wooed and won.

We shall not attempt to go into detail of Cerito's performance. She appeared in the old ballet *Ondine*, and danced her own *pas de l'ombre* in a hurricane of applause, and the *pas* from the *Lac de fées* with the same success. Every one remained to the end to pay fitting homage to the charming *danseuse*, who was summoned at the end, and deluged with plaudits.

Tuesday was the last subscription night. *Anna Bolena* was revived for Madame Barbieri Nini; and Cerito reappeared in *Ondine*.

Anna Bolena can only hope to keep possession of the stage by means of some great lyric artist, like Pasta. The music, though well written, and sometimes effective and highly dramatic, is heavy and uninteresting. The first finale is perhaps of the finest *morceau d'ensemble* Donizetti ever wrote. It is written closely after the manner of Rossini, and unmistakably betrays the master hand. Most of the last act is dull in the extreme, the pleasing aria, "Vive tu," however, helping to enliven it a good deal.

Of Madame Barbieri Nini's Anna Bolena we can speak in very high, but not unqualified, terms of praise. Madame Barbieri Nini is an immense artist—perhaps, too much of an artist. Every note and letter is studied and elaborated to perfection. In this respect she might well be a sister of John Kemble—that is any sister, except Mrs. Siddons, who in art was no sister of the renowned “John.” This Madame Barbieri Nini's art degenerates into artifice. She lacks but the *ars celare artem* to constitute her one of the greatest artists the world has produced. But Madame Barbieri Nini leaves all to art and little to nature. Her acting and singing throughout the opera was extremely fine, sometimes unsurpassingly so, and were it not for the too frequent exaggerations and elaborations would have been one of the finest performances we have seen for years. Her first song, “Come, innocente Giovane,” was magnificently given, with every charm which art could supply or fancy dictate, but was overloaded at the end with *flouriture*, which though dazzling and wonderfully novel and brilliant, was felt to be *de trop*. This feeling helped to mar the success of her effort. The immense execution displayed in the repeat was not so long, and consequently not so obtrusive. Madame Barbieri Nini was recalled with enthusiasm.

It is not our purpose to follow the performance in detail. A good notion of it may be gathered from what we have just stated. If it be demanded of us whether the Anna Bolena was better or worse than the Lucrezia Borgia. Our answer is, it was neither better, nor worse; it had the same excellencies, the same indications of high art, the same energy and power, the same passion and feeling, the same drawbacks in personal contortions, the same exaggerations, the same struggles for effect. If we were more closely pressed, we should say, perhaps, that we preferred her singing in Lucrezia, and her acting in Anna. Notwithstanding what we have said—we have judged the artist rigidly and righteously—we must express our conviction that Madame Barbieri Nini's Anna Bolena is a very great performance, and as such only have we ventured to criticise it.

Lablache, in Henry VIII., as the *Times* quaintly observed, “looked like a page torn from the History of England!” Albert Smith would have added, “folio edition.” The performance of the stupendous basso was as powerful as ever. We liked Calzolari as Percy, although he did not display any great amount of feeling. Madame Ida Bertrand was excellent in Smeaton, and Madame Guilianni made one of the best Catharine Seymours we ever saw. She sang delightfully, and acted with unusual feeling. In short the Opera was well given throughout, and merited the applause it obtained.

Cerito repeated her performances in *Ondine*, and was again received with unbounded acclamations.

On Wednesday the performances at playhouse prices commenced. The reduction movement we augured confidently would be sure to fill the house with money. Our prophecies always come off. On Wednesday, Thursday, and last night the theatre was filled in every part, and to-night, we understand, every place is let. Of course the theatre will be kept open for a week or two more, as long as the money keeps pouring in.

The performances on Wednesday consisted of an act of *Lucrezia Borgia*, *Don Pasquale*, with the ballet entertainments, *La Manola* for Fanny Cerito, and *Ondine*.

On Thursday, the first act of *Lucrezia Borgia*, *La Manola* for Cerito, the *Barbiere di Siviglia*, Lablache's last appearance this season, and the *Pas de l'Ombre* from *Ondine*.

Last night *Sonnambula* was given with Sontag, Calzolari and Lorenzo. The opera was followed by the *Grand pas de*

cinq from the *Metamorphoses*, danced by Mdlles. Amalia Ferraris, Rosa, Esper, Jullien and Lamoureux. This was succeeded by the last act of *Anna Bolena*, and the evening wound up with the *divertissement* from *Il Prodigio*.

To-night Cruvelli, green with her well won laurels at Worcester, will appear as Norma—in the first act only—and Madame Sontag will perform in one act of *La Figlia*. Various other entertainments, too numerous to specify, will succeed.

Next week we intend giving our review of the season.

ROYAL ITALIAN OPERA.

An extra night was given on Friday—last night week—when *Otello* was played for the first time this season, and the second act of *Der Freischütz* was added. The entertainment, however, so excellent, and so varied, failed to attract more than a moderate audience. The reason is not obvious. Perhaps Rossini and Weber are out of date, and are no longer the loadstones of theatres. Perhaps, being Friday, the aristocrats would not come, more especially as they were not in London. Perhaps, the supporters of the Royal Italian Opera reserved themselves for Mario, Viardot, and the *Prophete*, and postponed their visit for the Meyerbeer night. Whatever may have been the cause, the renters had the pit almost to themselves, and made quite a festival time of it.

We can tell the absentees, they had a great loss in not hearing the performance of *Otello*, which, in general, left little to be desired. Tamberlik was in prodigious force and sang throughout with tremendous power and fire. The famous duet between him and Ronconi in the second act created quite a furor, and was encored with acclamations. The audience would fain have it a third time, but Mr. Costa very properly put his veto upon the demand, and went on with the piece. In the last scene, one of the finest and most dramatic Rossini ever wrote—not melodramatic, like Meyerbeer and the modern romancists, but subtle, simple, and intense, without effort or elaboration, the pure dramatic—we admired Tamberlik amazingly. It was just the music and the scene to suit him. Every thing in this scene depends on legitimate singing and acting. There is no need for display of voice or gesture. All is free, and natural. Tamberlik's earnest and unpretending manner made the scene real and impressive, while his declamation and magnificent singing rendered it in the highest degree interesting. We grant that the last scene of *Otello* hardly comes up to the exigencies of modern taste. When the opera was written, Rossini did not consult the prurient sensibilities of the go-a-head classes. He left that to the romantic school, who followed in his wake.

Grisi's Desdemona has always seemed to us to be one of her most charming impersonations. She was in excellent voice on Friday, and sang the music very beautifully, more especially the exquisite ballata, “Assisa a pie d'un salice” (taken from Shakespeare, by the way, although Shakespeare never wrote it—the very words, “A poor soul sat sighing under a willow!”—we quote from memory, having only two editions of the poet at hand), and the pathetic prayer, “Deh! Calma O Ciel!”

Ronconi made Iago as conspicuous as it was possible to make a part by no means prominent or worthy. In the duet, as we have said, he materially aided in creating the enthusiasm excited. With Ronconi's fine intelligence and dramatic fire it was impossible for him not to endow the character of Iago with some interest; nevertheless, the part, vocal and histrionic, is almost entirely worthless, it being sacrilege to call it even a shadow of the huge original.

Tamburini should have played Elmiro, though Elmiro, Brabantio's Rossinian's successor, is no improvement on Shak-

peare. Tagliafico, however, did his best with it, and Tagliafico's best is not to be despised.

Signor Ciaffai played Roderigo, and had a cold.

If the performance of *Otello* did not create a great sensation outside doors, it certainly did inside. The opera was received throughout with immense enthusiasm, and Grisi and Tamberlik were called for after each act.

Of the second act of *Der Freischütz* it is unnecessary to say anything. The house was empty long before the curtain fell, proving that Weber's star is at present not in the ascendant.

Don Giovanni was given for the last time on Saturday. Madame Viardot repeated Donna Anna. Donna Anna is not one of Madame Viardot's most splendid assumptions. Madame Viardot has neither voice, nor stamina, nor appearance for Donna Anna. Donna Anna should have remained in possession of Grisi and not have been given to Madame Viardot. Madame Viardot next year would do well to give back to Grisi the part of Donna Anna. Such is all we have to say about the performance of *Don Giovanni*, which taken as a whole did not go entirely to our satisfaction. The house was tolerably attended.

Puritani on Tuesday attracted a very full attendance. Mario for ever! The name of the great tenor in the bills is a tower of strength, as the management must have long ere this found out. For ourselves we never greatly affected Mario in one of Rubini's parts, nor does Arturo in the *Puritani* constitute an exception. Mario cannot give his heart to the sentimental whine-music. He requires passion and vigour to bring out his powers to the full. Neither the melting "A te O cara," nor the die-away "Ella tremante" suit Mario. He is much more at home in the "Tu m'ami," or the death scene in *Lucrezia Borgia*. Tamburini, as we have said, is out of place in Giorgio, and Ronconi not in place in Riccardo. Nor is Grisi exactly what she was some fifteen years back, when *Puritani* was first produced, and she was in the zenith of her glory; so that the performance cannot exactly be entitled a *chef d'œuvre*. Nevertheless, Grisi achieved some grand things on Tuesday night, and the audience was too delighted and rapt to draw any unfair comparisons.

Madame Viardot and the *Prophete* made their last appearance on Thursday. The house was crowded to excess.

To-night the season closes with the *Huguenots*. Whether, following the example of Her Majesty's Theatre, the management intends to give a few performances at reduced prices we cannot say. Nothing has been announced.

Next week we shall give our *resume* of the season.

Dramatic Intelligence.

FRENCH PLAYS. ST. JAMES'S THEATRE.—This house closed for the season on Saturday last, with *La fille de l'Avare*, in which Mr. Bouffé was as great as ever. If during his forced secession from the stage, Mr. Bouffé has through severe illness lost a little of that energy which he sometimes threw into the violent scenes of this part, he more than made up for such a deficiency by his elaborate finish of the other phases of the character. We are no partisans of the ranting school, and have more than once expressed our conviction that effect is not necessarily the result of forcing the voice or straining the lungs by over-exertion. The greatest actress of modern times, Mdle. Rachel, is the best example we can mention in support of our hypothesis, and M. Bouffé also further bears us out in our argument, for the representation of Saturday last, presented us with a picture so finished in all its details, so minutely worked out,

and, withal, so full of real force and energy, that we could not but consider that we had lost nothing on the whole by this toning down, and we were, moreover, forcibly struck by the artistic care with which the great actor contrived to turn to account even his physical failings.

With this performance finished the season of French Plays for 1851, a season somewhat shorter, it is true, than any we have had since seven or eight years, but remarkable for the long duration of Mademoiselle Rachel's engagement and the production of several new pieces, in which she played a principal part. The engagements have, as usual, comprised the *élite* of the Parisian companies, comprising the names of Mdles. Rachel, St. Marc, Scriwaneck, Octave, Judith, and Messrs. Raphael Felix, Bouffé, Regnier, Lavassor, Lafont. The month of May was dedicated to the lighter productions of the French stage. Two new pieces were played, both of which were successful. *Bataille de dames* is one of the most amusing pieces of the modern repertoire, although not remarkable for either novelty of plot or display of wit. *L'Amour à l'aveuglette* is of Palais-Royal extraction and teeming with broad humour from beginning to end. M. Regnier also performed in the *Comaraderie* this season, but remembering the great cast of last year, this master-piece of Scribe's failed to attract the attention of the public. Yet M. Regnier has gained in public estimation and made us yearn for an actor of equal merit for the English stage. M. Lafont continues to be a universal favourite and will be so long as genuine comedy and gentlemanly bearing are understood and appreciated in this country as they deserve. M. Lavassor, as usual, commanded the ready laugh of his audience, having undertaken the arduous task of amusing them by his sole efforts and having admirably succeeded in doing so. His *Fete à la representation de Robert le Diable* is an admirable burlesque both on Mr. Scribe's libretto and on Meyerbeer's music. His *magister du village* is replete with genuine comedy. Of M. Bouffé we have already given our opinion, and we sincerely trust that another year will send him back to us with renewed vigour and unimpaired faculties. Mademoiselle Judith is a clever actress and a great acquisition to the French stage; Mdle. St. Marc evinced considerable progress in her profession and with study, may still occupy a high position. Mdle. Rebecca Felix made her first appearance in the part of *Catarina* in Victor Hugo's play of *Angelo*; she evinced considerable aptitude for the stage and holds us the promise of being both an intelligent and careful actress. Mdle. Rachel has, however, been the principal attraction of the season. In addition to her impersonations of the classical drama, we have had an opportunity of judging her in a totally different range of characters; the result, considering the choice of pieces, has been perfectly satisfactory. Mdle. Rachel has opened a new vein of riches for her great talents and displayed capabilities of the very highest order, apart from the solemnity of the school of Corneille and Racine. However we may condemn the feeling which pervades such productions as *Angelo* and *Valeria*, we cannot but admire the versatility of talent displayed by the great *tragedienne* in the part of *Thisbe* and the double impersonation of the Roman empress and courtesan in *Valeria*; neither can we allow the modest and unassuming Mdle. de Belle Isle to pass without a warm tribute of admiration.

To Mr. Mitchell we tender our best thanks, for the tact and superior discrimination which he has displayed both in the choice of his actors and the style of entertainment offered to the public. The same unvarying good feeling exists between Mr. Mitchell and his subscribers, and this is the natural result of a perfect *entente* of their wishes and a resolve to carry out to the very letter the promises made in the original prospectus. We are

happy to say that the houses have been unusually good, more particularly during Mdlle. Rachel's performances, and we trust that the manager has as good cause to be pleased with the public as they with him.

J. de C.—

ST. JAMES'S.—A group of flowers in worsted work, or a portrait of F. M. the Duke of Wellington in Berlin wool, looking very mathematical and square-y, if we may be allowed to use the word, is all very well in its way, although we frankly own that we should prefer a penny lithograph if we were desirous of obtaining anything like a true representation of the horticultural productions we have mentioned, or of the "Hero of a hundred fights." The case is exactly the same with the two young ladies, Kate and Ellen Bateman—of the ages of eight and nine respectively—who appeared last Monday at this theatre, in the characters of Richard III. and Richmond. As prodigies they are certainly very excellent, but as representatives of the two principal characters in Shakspeare's drama they are simply absurd. If a parrot could be taught to go beyond the usual limits of a parrot's vocabulary, and extend its usual hospitable question of inviting itself to take "a cup of tea, pretty Poll," or its warlike command, "make ready, present, fire!" to blank verse, then we say that even the Bateman children, clever as they—as children—are, would be obliged to yield the palm to the parrot. Such performances in our estimation are a desecration of the stage. Besides this they are injurious to the children themselves. If a foal is ridden too soon it will not last long, and if a child's talents are called into requisition too early they will end in miserable mediocrity. Witness those former wonders, Masters Betty and Burke. In addition to this, these juvenile impersonations injure the children themselves, for, as Hamlet has it—"Will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players (as is most like, if their means are no better) that *Barnum* does them wrong, to make them exclaim against their own succession?"

After the tragedy there was a little vaudeville, entitled "The Young Couple," which was far better adapted for the two little girls. As we said before, as prodigies they were certainly very excellent, but it grieves us to see the stage lowered by such exhibitions.

At the other theatres there has been no novelty save at the OLYMPIC, where a production called "A Night's Adventure," met with the disapprobation of a sensible audience last Monday, although it is still running. The sooner it runs away entirely the better.

"What's in a name," says Shakspeare. A mistake sometimes, as was the case in our last week's article on the SURREY, in which we printed the name of *Valentine* for that of *Marguerite*, which was the rôle sustained by Miss Annie Romer, who has since repeated it several times with even more than the great amount of success we chronicled in our preceding number.

Miscellaneous.

EGYPTIAN HALL, PICCADILLY.—A new feature has just been added to the admirable moving diorama of the Holy Land, which promises to become highly attractive. With the well-defined art of the painter nature has been very judiciously blended, the latter being in the shape of a party—male and female—consisting of about fifteen, called the "Syro-Lebanon Company," who illustrate the diorama in question. They are natives of the neighbourhood of Mount Lebanon, and have recently arrived from Aleppo, and they consist of musicians, singers, and story-tellers. They appear

in the oriental costumes of Arabia, Syria, and Palestine, and represent the manners and customs of their country in a series of groups, both picturesque and instructive. Amongst other matters of interest, they illustrate a marriage ceremony, which, from the peculiarity of such eastern rites, combined with the ease and grace of their performance, is highly interesting. They also realize the dioramic scenes as they pass before the spectator, and sing the melodies of their land, which, although somewhat strange and grating occasionally to the musical ear, are nevertheless useful and amusing, as showing Syrian ideas of lyrical art. We believe this diorama of the Holy Land is the only exhibition in London illustrated by people from the country depicted; and as they convey to the mind both amusement and instruction, the Syro-Lebanon Company will doubtless reap a full share of public patronage. The personal attractions, also, of some of the party are not to be overlooked; and in addition to the general effect, the performers are accompanied by a very intelligent native interpreter, educated in Aleppo, whose knowledge of our own language and suavity of manners are well calculated to render him an acquisition to this justly popular exhibition.

EXETER-HALL.—The *Messiah* was performed last night by the members of the Sacred Harmonic Society. The principal vocalists were Madame Clara Novello, Madame Macfarren, Mr. Benson, Mr. Manvers, and Mr. H. Phillips. Madame Macfarren made her first appearance at Exeter-hall, and created a decided impression by her fine rendering of the contralto music. She supplied the place of Miss Dolby, who was absent at Worcester, being engaged in the festival. Miss Dolby could hardly have found a better substitute than Madame Macfarren.

TOM COOKE AND SIR JAMES SCARLETT.—The following amusing anecdote of the well-known "Tom Cooke," the actor and musician, is extracted from a spirited sketch of his doings by "An Old Stager" in the *Sunday Times*:—"At a trial at the Court of King's Bench (June, 1833) betwixt certain publishing twiddle-dums and tweedledees, as to an alleged piracy of an arrangement of the "Old English Gentleman"—an Old English air, by the bye—Cooke was subpoenaed as a witness by one of the parties. On his cross-examination by Sir James Scarlett, afterwards Lord Abinger, for the opposite side, that learned counsel rather flippantly questioned him thus: "Sir, you say that the two melodies are the same, but different; now what do you mean by that, sir?" To this Tom promptly answered, "I said that the notes in the two copies were alike, but with a different accent, the one being in common time, the other in six-eight time; and, consequently, the position of the accented notes was different." Sir James: "What is a musical accent?" My terms are a Guinea a lesson, sir." (A loud laugh.) Sir James (rather ruffled): "Never mind your terms here. I ask you what is a musical accent. Can you see it?" Cooke: "No." Sir James: "Can you feel it?" Cooke: "A musician can!" (Great laughter.) Sir James (very angry): "Now, pray, sir, don't beat about the bush, but explain to his lordship (Lord Denman, who was the judge who tried the cause) and the jury, who are supposed to know nothing about music, the meaning of what you call accent." Cooke: "Accent in music is a certain stress laid upon a particular note, in the same manner as you would lay a stress upon any given word for the purpose of being better understood. Thus if I were to say, 'You are an *ass*,' it rests on *ass*; but if I were to say, 'You are an *ass*,' it rests on *you*, Sir James." Reiterated shouts of laughter by the whole court, in which the bench itself joined, followed this repartee. Silence having been at length obtained, the judge with much seeming gravity, accosted the chapfallen counsel thus:—Lord Denman: "Are you satisfied, Sir James?" Sir James (who, *deep red* as he naturally was, to use poor Jack Reeve's own words, had become *scarlet* in more than name), in a great huff, said, "The witness may go down."

MR. W. DORRELL.—This eminent pianist has returned to town after a visit to Paris, where his talent was duly appreciated. Mr. Dorrell received an invitation from Louis Napoleon, the President of the Republic, to be present at the festivities given in honour of the visit of the Lord Mayor of London to the city of Paris, and met also with much attention from the *haut ton*, as well as from the musical celebrities of the "city of pleasure."

CATHERINE HAYES.—The near approach of this gifted lady's departure for America calls upon us for a few words respecting her not to herald her arrival or to anticipate her success—but to state, honestly and fairly, the grounds upon which she is fully entitled to the utmost quantity she can receive. Catherine Hayes is a native of the Emerald Isle, where she is generally termed "the Swan of Erin," but whether in deference to her musical position, or in contradistinction to her only rival, Jenny Lind, termed "the Swedish Nightingale," it is not at all necessary to inquire. This interesting lady is a native of Limerick; and her good conduct and great talent having obtained for her the patronage of the late bishop thereof, she became, through such influence, a pupil of Signor Sapia, in Dublin, and subsequently of Emanuel Garcia, in Paris, and of Felice Ronconi, in Milan. It was therefore utterly impossible that genius of her high order could do otherwise than reach a full degree of perfection under such tuition; and thus we find that after going through the ordeal of three years' practice in Ireland, from her *début* in 1841 until October 1844, she started for the continent in that month. It is unnecessary to follow this *artiste* through her varied career in every part of Italy, from 1844 to 1849; but it is only an act of justice to state that, in the theatre of every country she visited, she left behind an indelible recollection of her commanding powers. Catherine Hayes made her *début* at Covent Garden Theatre, in April, 1849, and confirmed with us the impressions she made upon others. Nor must it be forgotten that she created this excitement when the public mind had by no means recovered from the extraordinary frenzy it had been thrown into by the appearance of Jenny Lind—a degree of *furor* still more manifestly indulged in by the Americans, amongst whom our fair countrywoman will have to encounter the same degree of comparison. The advantages of Catherine Hayes are youth, beauty, and genius. She is the first of British singers, and we have not one moment's doubt that she will meet with a reception in America that will be equal to the brightest dream of her own enthusiasm, or the expectations of her friends. Her talent and her station in art are European; and America has ever corresponded to the decision of Europe, in a desire to cultivate that refinement in the one, which necessarily leads to its adoption in the other great empire of the world. There is something highly fascinating and deeply interesting in contemplating the flight of a young and brilliant creature like this, waiting in person the gifts of her gentle nature to a far and a foreign land. Apart from all the pecuniary views that such speculations arise and end in, no higher compliment can be paid to any country than the desire of a stranger from other lands to receive its welcome, to court its inquiry, and to obtain its sanction. Catherine Hayes will arrive in America in the bloom of her days, in the zenith of her talent, in the height of her popularity, and in the fulness of public expectation.—*Globe*.

MARRIAGE OF MISS HELEN FAUCIT.—In the usual column, under the head of marriages, will be found the announcement of the marriage of the accomplished and graceful actress, Miss Helen Faucit, to Theodore Martin, Esq., a gentleman well known in the literary circles as the Bon Gaultier of *Tait's Magazine*, and the translator of that charming little drama, *King René's Daughter*, in the delineation of which Miss Faucit reached the heart of every auditor. We are sure that, among her numerous admirers in this locality, there will be a general expression of sympathy in the step she has taken, and a heartfelt hope for her future happiness. We are not yet aware if it be her intention to continue on the stage, but from the circumstance of there having been no announcement to the contrary during her recent performances at the Olympic Theatre, London, we live in the anticipation that the finest illustrator of Shakspeare now on the stage, and altogether the most poetic of modern dramatic artists, will still remain to grace the profession of which she is so distinguished an ornament.—*Manchester Examiner*.

ON THE ORIGIN OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC.—The first mention that we have of music or musical instruments is in Holy Writ, where we are told, in the 4th chapter of Genesis, 21st verse, when the sacred penman is enumerating the posterity of Cain, that "Jubal was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ," from which it is most probable that he was the inventor of instru-

mental music; and it is also probable that the idea first originated in him hearing the sound produced by the percussion of the metals used in the workshop of his brother, Tubal Cain, who, we are told, worked in brass and iron. From an account given by the Padre Martini, he imagines that Adam was instructed by his Creator in every art and science, and that a knowledge of music was of course included—a knowledge which Adam employed in praising and adoring the Supreme Being.

The learned Padre, however, subsequently attempts to prove that Tubal was the inventor, not only of instrumental, but of vocal music—a position inconsistent with the idea that Adam derived the knowledge of the latter from the Most High, and which is not borne out by the sacred text, where Jubal is mentioned as the inventor of instrumental music only.

Though the records of the state of music in the antediluvian period of the world are so scanty, yet it would not be wrong in supposing that, in the sixteen hundred years and upwards which elapsed between the creation and the deluge, considerable progress was made in the science, and that various wind and stringed instruments were then invented to accompany the voice; for we are told in the 4th chapter of Genesis, 26th verse, that in the days of Seth, about the period of the birth of Enos, viz. 3664 years B.C., "men began to call upon the name of the Lord," and appears to have been the first introduction of music into religious rites.

This is all that can be predicted of music before the flood; and though the deluge swept away all the glory and grandeur of the antediluvian world, yet we cannot suppose that Noah and his family were ignorant of the arts and sciences taught before that event. Accordingly, we find that tradition carries back the invention of many arts to the period when that patriarch lived and walked upon the earth; and we undoubtedly see in him the original of more than one of the deities of Egypt and Greece.—*From H. Tomlinson's Lectures on Ancient Music*.

MISS CATHERINE HAYES' farewell concert at Liverpool takes place on Monday. The vocalists who assist the "Irish nightingale" are Miss Williams, Mr. Augustus Braham, and Herr Mengis: Signor Sivioli is the violinist, and Mr. Lavenu the conductor.

MISS STEELE.—We regret to hear that this talented vocalist met with a severe accident, a short time since, when crossing a crowded thoroughfare in the City. We are, however, pleased to learn that the fair *cantatrice* is rapidly recovering, and will be able soon to resume her professional duties.

THE SPANISH DANCERS, who made their *début* a few weeks since at her Majesty's Theatre, have been engaged by the lessee of the Liverpool Theatre, where they have been received with great enthusiasm by crowded audiences.

HAYMARKET THEATRE.—Macfarren's popular opera, *King Charles the Second*, will be produced shortly at this theatre, with Mr. W. Harrison, and Miss Pyne in their original part. It is also reported that Madame Macfarren will be engaged for her original character, Julian.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W. S. YORKSHIRE.—The works will be reviewed in their turn. We thank W. S. for his communication.

Our GRAY'S INN correspondent is informed that the "OPERATIC STARS" have all been written expressly for, and published in the *Musical World*. The numbers in which they have individually appeared we have not time to ascertain. Consult index of two last volumes. The composer of *Marijána* is at present in New York.

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